(b) Out of the above, 4076 cases have been transferred to the concerned Ministries/Departments for disposal under intimation to the petitioners. 647 cases were taken up by the Department of AR & PG for being pursued with the concerned Organisations. Out of these, 185 cases have been disposed of and 462 are pending.

(c) and (d) The system of grievance redress in Central Government offices operates on a decentralised basis. As most of the grievances arise at the field level, their actual redress has necessarily to come from the agencies functioning at the local level, which arc fully conversant with the subject matter or grievances. Grievances received, therefore, arc sent to the concerned Ministries/ Departments/Organisations for redress and sending a reply to the petitioner. Policy guidelines have been issued to all Ministries/Departments to institutionalize public as well as staff grievance redress machinery in each organisation. Several measures, such as placing the public grievances redress machinery under the charge of a senior officer, fixing time limits for acknowledgement and final disposal of grievances, monitoring their disposal at senior levels, computerising grievance handling and monitoring, giving a reasoned reply while rejecting a grievance petition, fixing onc day of the week to hear and receive public grievances etc. have been taken for expeditious and time bound disposal of grievances. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, as the nodal agency for redress of public grievances, reviews the internal grievances redress machinery in Ministries/ Departments from time to time and recommends measures to strengthen it.

Recruitment of Steno Grade 'D'

584. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to change in scheme of examination for Stenographers Examination, no appointment to Stenographers Grade D posts CSSS/RBSSSIFS(B)/AFHQSS has been made after 1998, resulting in a substantial number of posts lying vacant;

(b) if so, the number of posts lying vacant in these Departments as on 1st April, 2001;

(c) the steps taken so far to ensure filling up of these vacancies on priority; and

(d) the anticipated time-frame, alongwith the formalities involved, by which all these vacancies would be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir, no appointment to Stenographers Grade D could be made after 1998 till January, 2001 owing to change in the examination system and raising of retirement age from 58 to 60 years.

(b) The number of vacancies reported to the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) by Department of Personnel & Training (DOPT) for Stenographers Grade 'D' was 359 for 1999 examination. As regards Stenographers Grade 'D' in RBSSS/IFS(B)/AFHQSS, the respective cadre controlling authorities reported the vacancy position directly to the SSC and no information in this regard is available in DOPT.

(c) and (d) On switch over the new systems, the SSC have notified a Combined Matriculation Level Examination in May, 1999 and has also been conducting competitive examination on biomonthly / quarterly basis since August 2000. In CSSS, 62 Stenographers Grade 'D' have already been appointed during 2001 and appointment for 21 more candidates are in advanced stage of processing. On receipt of final results from SSC, vacancies will be filled as and when adequate number of successful candidates are available. Similar action to fill vacancies is being taken by the respective cadre authorities of RBSSS / IFS(B) / AFHQSS.

Discipline among the Employees

585. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsreport appearing in the 'Statesman' dated the 19th June, 2001 under the caption. "Dress code indiscipline costs Government Rs. 75 crore a year";

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps, if any, are proposed to be taken to address the problems raised in the report so as to tone up the discipline among the employees and to do away with huge influctuous expenditure?